

Message Text

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SUBJ: REVERBERATIONS FROM TRUDEAU SPEECH IN QUEBEC

REF: QUEBEC 0044 MAR 6

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. MOST DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS AT THE 5TH CONVENTION OF THE QUEBEC BRANCH OF THE FEDERAL LIBERAL PARTY WERE SURPRISED AT THE OPEN CRITICISM OF QUEBEC PREMIER BOURASSA IN PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S CONTROVERSIAL OPENING SPEECH REPORTED IN REFTEL. MOST PRAISED TRUDEAU'S COURAGE AND CANDOR IN RAISING FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES MOST POLITICIANS SHUN BUT MANY - INCLUDING THE 50 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES WHO ARE ALSO MILITANTS IN THE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY - FELT THAT HE HAD HARSHLY AND USELESSLY IMPLIED THAT THEIR PROVINCIAL LEADER, PREMIER BOURASSA, WAS AN INCOMPETENT AND QUOTES POLITICALLY STUPID QUOTES. WHILE SOME OF THE DELEGATES WHO ARE ACTIVE ONLY IN FEDERAL POLITICS PRAISED THE SPEECH, THE MAJORITY OF THE DELEGATES DEPLORED TRUDEAU'S PERSONAL ATTACK ON BOURASSA AND CONTINUED TO ASK FOR FEDERAL HELP WITH OLYMPIC DEFICIT.

2. MARC LALONDE, FEDERAL MINISTER OF HEALTH AND LEADER OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE QUEBEC LIBERAL CAUCUS IN PARLIAMENT, ATTEMPTED TO BIND

UP WOUNDS OPENED BY TRUDEAU IN HIS CLOSING SPEECH TO CONVENTION. HE POINTED OUT THAT A DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAD TO OPENLY DEBATE ITS POLICIES AND SUGGESTED THAT SOME DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS IS INEVITABLE. NONETHELESS, ONE SHOULD NOT EXAGGERATE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN LIBERALS OF OTTAWA AND QUEBEC WHO REMAIN CLOSELY ALLIED. JEAN CHRETIEN, PRESIDENT OF TREASURY COUNCIL, AND FEDERAL MINISTER JEAN MARCHAND ALSO TRIED THROW OIL ON TROUBLED WATER BY MINIMIZING IMPORTANCE OF TRUDEAU ATTACK AND SPEAKING OF POSSIBLE FURTHER NON-REVENUE INDIRECT FEDERAL HELP FOR OLYMPIC FINANCING.

3. PARTI QUEBECOIS LEADER RENE LEVESQUE IN QUEBEC CITY OVER WEEKEND FOR REGIONAL PQ CONGRESS ACCUSED TRUDEAU OF ATTEMPTING TO PUT A LAST FEATHER IN HIS CAP WITH REPATRIATION OF CONSTITUTION BEFORE LEAVING OFFICE. HE SAID TRUDEAU'S TREATMENT OF BOURASSA SHOWS WHAT A LOW STATE QUEBEC HAS REACHED UNDER BOURASSA'S LEADERSHIP. JACQUES YVAN MORIN, PQ LEADER IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMENTED THAT IF ONE ACTS AS A VALET, ONE IS TREATED AS A VALET. MORIN, AN EXPERT IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, OPINED THAT OTTAWA CANNOT REPATRIATE CONSTITUTION WITHOUT APPROVAL OF PROVINCES. HE CONCLUDED THAT IF BOURASSA CANNOT STAND ON HIS OWN TWO FEET, PQ WAS READY STEP IN TO DEFEND QUEBEC'S RIGHTS.

4. AMONG THE THEORIES CIRCULATING HERE TO EXPLAIN TRUDEAU'S HARSH TREATMENT OF BOURASSA ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- TRUDEAU WANTS TO BE KNOWN AS FEDERAL CANADIAN LEADER FROM COAST-TO-COAST
- TRUDEAU NOW SEES BOURASSA AS A LIABILITY TO FEDERAL LIBERALS AND PERHAPS PROVINCIAL LIBERALS AS WELL SO HE WOULD LIKE TO PRECIPITATE HIS REPLACEMENT AS LEADER IN QUEBEC.
- TRUDEAU FEELS THREATENED IN THE ENGLISH PROVINCES (BY JOE CLARK) AND IN SNUBBING QUEBEC VIA ITS PREMIER, HE HOPES TO BUILD CAPITAL IN THE ANGLOPHONE PROVINCES.
- TRUDEAU REALLY IS UNHAPPY WITH BILL 22 WHICH HAS HURT HIS EFFORTS TO IMPLANT BILINGUALISM FROM COAST-TO-COAST.

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5. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR HOW DEEP A SCHISM BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL PARTIES TRUDEAU'S REMARKS HAVE CAUSED.
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THEY CERTAINLY THREW A PALL OVER THE CONVENTION AND LIMITED SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER PARTY BUSINESS. VIRTUALLY ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE SEARCHING FOR AN EXPLANATION FOR TRUDEAU'S REMARKS AND ATTEMPTING TO EVALUATE THE REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE BOURASSA GOVERNMENT. NONE OF THE THEORIES IN PARAGRAPH FOUR ABOVE SEEMS ADEQUATE JUSTIFICATION TO US FOR THE UNUSUALLY HARSH PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ONE PARTY LEADER BY ANOTHER. WE

ASSUME THE USUALLY POLITICALLY ASTUTE PRIME MINISTER
MUST HAVE HAD SOME TRANSCENDING GOAL IN MIND. HOWEVER,
PENDING REVELATION OF SUCH MASTER PLAN, IT NOW APPEARS
HIS REMARKS COULD HARM HIS PARTYS FUTURE ELECTORAL
CHANCES IN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS AND EVEN THE CAUSE
OF FEDERALISM IN QUEBEC.
MCNAMARA

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